

PROJECT OBJECTIVES, GOALS, AND IMPLEMENTATION (POGI)

FY 2015 Youth Leadership Program: TechGirls

ECA-ECAPEC-15-001

Office of Citizen Exchanges

Youth Programs Division

The POGI guidelines apply specifically to the Request for Grant Proposals (RFGP) issued by the Youth Programs Division for the FY 2015 TechGirls Program. Proposals must conform to the RFGP, the Guidelines stated in this document, and the standard Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI). Applications not adhering to the conditions set forth herein may be deemed technically ineligible. These guidelines are specific to the program mentioned above and are IN ADDITION TO the Standard Guidelines outlined in the PSI. If there is a perceived disparity between the standard and program specific Guidelines and the program information supplied in the accompanying RFGP, the RFGP is to be the dominant reference.

This document provides guidance for the preparation of a proposal for the TechGirls Program, and it establishes guidelines for the implementation of the cooperative agreement.

I. STATEMENT OF WORK

The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) and the Public Affairs Sections (PAS) of U.S. Embassies and Consulates in the participating countries and territories are supporting the participation of approximately 27 high school girls from the Middle East and North Africa in an intensive, substantive three-to four-week exchange program in the United States focused on promoting high-level study of applied technology. The program will involve approximately three participants from each participating country or territory.

The responsibilities of the award recipient will be the following:

1) Preparation

- a) Provide U.S. Embassy Public Affairs staff with program materials and logistical information for preparation sessions at the pre-departure orientations.
- b) If applicable - Recruitment and selection of American participants for a technology camp
 - o Develop plans for outreach and recruitment of U.S. students that will generate a pool of qualified candidates that represent the diversity of the United States.
 - o Develop an application and screening process.
 - o Conduct a merit-based selection process for U.S. participants, ages 15-17, with clearly identified criteria for the selection.
 - o Recommend the final participants and alternates to ECA.

(Please refer to Section II “Program Specific Guidelines” under “Participants” for more detail on the involvement of American participants/peers.)

- c) Arrange for domestic travel, ground transportation, group meals, and the disbursement of pocket money to participants.

- d) Enroll foreign participants in the Bureau's Accident and Sickness Program for Exchanges (ASPE) health benefits plan for the duration of the exchange, and assist with claims as necessary.
 - e) Hire staff, as needed, to accompany participants during the exchange period. Criminal background checks, including a search of the Department of Justice's National Sex Offender Public Registry, must be conducted for all program staff and for new staff prior to hiring. The award recipient must also ensure that program staff have been adequately trained to work with this cohort of students.
 - f) Arrange housing for the participants in a dormitory, hotel, homestay, or some combination thereof and provide staff monitoring of housing arrangements. Carefully recruit, screen, and select diverse local host families to offer home hospitality or homestays (lodging and meals) to the participants during the exchange, if applicable.
 - g) Orient staff and those participating from the U.S. host communities, including American peers and host families, to the goals of the program and to the cultures and sensitivities of the exchange visitors.
- 2) Exchange Activities
- a) Design, plan, and implement an intensive and substantive three- to four-week program on the stated theme. Exchange activities must promote program goals.
 - b) Conduct an orientation for participants upon their arrival in the United States to review program goals, objectives, and expectations.
 - c) Arrange appropriate community, cultural, social, and civic activities.
 - d) Engage participants in at least one facilitated community service activity during the U.S. program.
 - e) Provide day-to-day monitoring of the participants' well-being, preventing and dealing with any misunderstandings or adjustment issues that may arise in a timely manner. Inform ECA and PAS about any significant health or safety issues affecting program participants.
 - f) Make appropriate accommodations and arrangements for participants' religious observances (e.g., allotting time for prayer or services, providing halal meals)
 - g) Arrange a short, substantive visit to Washington, D.C., at the conclusion of the program to allow participants to debrief U.S. Department of State representatives on their exchange experiences, to summarize individual and/or team projects, and to have a final closing workshop to review key program concepts and further prepare participants for follow-on activities upon their return home.
- 3) Follow-on activities
- a) Assist participants throughout the exchange in brainstorming and planning creative and effective ways to address project themes as a means to amplify program impact.
 - b) Support alumni in making presentations or preparing articles to share their experiences once they return home.
 - c) Advise and assist the U.S. Embassies in implementing follow-on activities that foster continued engagement among the participants and offer opportunities to reinforce the ideas, values, and skills imparted during the exchange.
- 4) Design and implement an evaluation plan that assesses the impact of the program (See section IV.3d.3).
- 5) Work in consultation with ECA and PAS in the implementation of the program, provide timely reporting of progress, and comply with financial and program reporting requirements.

- 6) Manage all financial aspects of the program, including management of sub-award relationships with partner organizations, if applicable.

All participants will travel on a U.S. Government designation for the J Exchange Visitor Program. ECA will work directly with our U.S. missions overseas to facilitate the participants' application for J-1 visas for entry to the United States.

II. PROGRAM SPECIFIC GUIDELINES

Participants:

U.S. Embassies in the participating countries will recruit, screen, and select the TechGirls participants. Although the award recipient is not expected to be involved in participant selection, it may serve the posts in an advisory role, as needed.

The selected participants will be high school girls, aged 15 to 17 years old, who already have a demonstrated aptitude and a serious interest in technology, engineering, and/or math in their academic studies. Participants will be proficient in the English. The Bureau anticipates that three participants will be selected from each participating country or territory.

TechGirls participants must be provided with ample opportunity during the exchange program to interact with American peers who are of the same age and share similar interests in the field of technology. American students may be participants of an existing technology camp in which TechGirls will be incorporated, or may be selected to participate in a technology camp specifically designed for the TechGirls participants. Those applicants electing to involve Americans in the latter option must competitively recruit and select at least five (5) American students and provide a detailed description of their recruitment and selection strategies, along with selection criteria, within their proposals.

Orientations: The U.S. Embassy Public Affairs staff will provide participants with a pre-departure orientation, reviewing the details of the program, cross-cultural issues, and travel and logistical matters. The award recipient will provide pre-departure materials and information about the U.S. program to assist the U.S. Embassies, participants, and their families in preparation for the exchange.

The award recipient will also conduct an orientation for the TechGirls participants upon their arrival in the United States to review program goals, objectives, and expectations, as well as American culture, traditions, and values.

An orientation must also be conducted for those participating from U.S. host communities, including American peers and host families, to prepare them for the exchange experience and provide them with information on the goals of the program and the cultures and sensitivities of the visitors.

Flight Escorts: U.S. Embassies will identify flight escorts to travel with the participants on international flights from their home countries to the United States. Similar arrangements will be made for the participants' return travel. Flight escorts may be staff members of the embassies,

staff of local NGOs, educators, and/or consultants. The selected flight escorts will not have any role in the actual exchange other than providing this service.

Logistics: Manage all logistical arrangements, including U.S. domestic travel, ground transportation, accommodations, group meals, and disbursement of pocket money. It is not necessary to budget for international travel; the participating Embassies will arrange and purchase international airline tickets for participants and flight escorts, based on an arrival date and U.S. location specified by the award recipient.

U.S. Exchange Activities: Design and plan three to four weeks of exchange activities that provide a creative and substantive program aimed at developing the participants' knowledge and skill base in the field of technology. Ideally, part of the exchange will take place on a university campus or in a similar environment and focus primarily on practical experiences, hands-on classes, labs, and individual or team-based projects.

The academic component of the exchange (technology camp) should provide participants with an overview and examination of technology related topics and engage them in in-depth, "how-to" lessons in areas of specific interest. Through interactive activities, participants will work towards the development of tangible product(s) that they may design together in small teams or individually, depending on participant interests and preferences. The camp should also be complemented by additional activities that may include, but are not limited to, mentoring experiences; job shadowing or mini-internships; site visits to high tech companies; community service activities; and social, recreational, and cultural activities. Applicants have the flexibility of structuring the camp and complementary activities in a manner they deem to be most beneficial and constructive for the participants. This may include scheduling mornings for the camp and afternoons for site visits and other activities, or implementing the camp for a defined period within the exchange and conducting complementary activities prior to and/or after the camp takes place. Participation in a pre-established camp or workshop is acceptable as long as it fulfills all of the stated objectives.

Potential topics to be covered during the exchange may include the following, in addition to others not mentioned:

- 1) Web design and development
- 2) Programming in C++ or Java
- 3) Software applications
- 4) Computer network systems
- 5) Mobile communications technology and applications
- 6) Online game design and programming
- 7) 3D modeling
- 8) Robotics
- 9) Cloud computing
- 10) Social networking

Throughout the exchange, participants will engage in small group activities leading to the development of projects that are relevant to the field and will produce tangible, presentable

outcomes. They also will have time allotted to plan for follow-on activities. Participants will be required to participate in at least one community service activity, not necessarily technology focused, in order to expose them to community activism and engagement in the United States.

Opportunities for participants to interact with their American peers may take the form of academic/social activities jointly attended by American teenagers, home hospitality, homestays, and/or dorm-style accommodations with American roommates.

Examples of the kinds of program activities that may be included:

- 1) Trainings and workshops on project design and development
- 2) Leadership development with workshop trainers or organizations
- 3) Site visits to technology companies
- 4) Meetings with technology experts
- 5) Interactive computer labs and classes
- 6) Team building exercises related to developing strategies for future collaboration and cooperation among participants
- 7) Visits to historical sites and cultural sites
- 8) Sports, drama, fine arts, musical and other extracurricular activities which provide opportunities for participants to work and play together

Applicants must also include a short, substantive visit to Washington, D.C. at the conclusion of the program to allow participants to debrief U.S. Department of State representatives on their exchange experiences and individual or team projects, and engage in additional cultural and/or skill-building activities.

The program staff will host a closing workshop, or series of workshops, for participants prior to departure, which will focus on summarizing the experience and preparing for re-entry. The participants should be encouraged and assisted with developing projects and activities to implement on their return home. The ideas and plans should spring from the participants, but the project staff should be prepared to assist and direct the participants in developing these plans during the U.S.-based exchange. The final closing workshop should be held during the visit to Washington, D.C. at the conclusion of the program.

The award recipient will arrange for highly qualified mentors for the participants during the course of the exchange; the mentors may also serve as trainers or instructors as appropriate. Adult staff should be available to support the participants during the course of the program.

Accommodations: Arrange housing for the participants in a dormitory, hotel, homestay, or some combination thereof and provide staff monitoring of the housing arrangement throughout the exchange. In dorm or hotel accommodations, young women who share similar interests in the field, such as university students or professionals, should live with the participants to provide supervision, and also to serve as mentors and role models for the girls. If using homestays, families must be properly screened and briefed and criminal background checks, including a search of the Department of Justice's National Sex Offender Public Registry, must be conducted for members of host families and others living in the home who are 18 years of age or older,

regardless of the length of the homestay (e.g. one night or more). If homestays are not proposed for a significant portion of the exchange, at a minimum, home hospitality arrangements should include a weekend stay (Friday night – Sunday night) with a local American family.

Homestays: The Bureau encourages placing participants in homestays for a portion of the program, to be proposed by the applicant, to provide them with greater exposure to American culture and day-to-day living, and to foster the development of lasting relationships with American families.

The award recipient must have a clear and careful recruitment, screening, and selection process for host families, and must also provide the families with an orientation prior to the arrival of their exchange participants, emphasizing the goals of the program. Screening needs to include a visit to the home to meet all members of the household to ensure that the host family is capable of providing a comfortable and nurturing home environment. The orientation will provide families with detailed information on the exchange program, the parameters of their participation, duties, and obligations, and information on cultural differences and practices.

ECA encourages diversity in the recruitment and selection of host families. They may represent diversity in family size and structure, race and ethnicity, socio-economic status, religion, and geography. Host families need to have adequate financial resources to undertake hosting obligations. While exchange participants may share a room with someone of a similar age and the same gender, they must have their own bed. Participants may be placed with host families as singles or in pairs.

The award recipient should be aware of and make an effort to accommodate participants' dietary and religious needs, which may include making halal meal options available and scheduling time within the program agenda for daily prayer and any other religious observances.

Monitoring: Develop and implement a plan to monitor the participants' safety and well-being while on the exchange and to create opportunities for participants to share potential issues and resolve them promptly. The award recipient will be required to provide proper staff supervision and facilitation to ensure that the teenagers have safe and pedagogically rich programs. Young women in the same or related fields should be recruited to serve as mentors and role models for the girls throughout the program. These mentors, along with the staff, will assist the youth with cultural adjustments, provide societal context to enhance learning, and counsel students as needed.

Follow-on Activities: Assist participants throughout the course of the exchange in brainstorming and planning creative ways to address project themes as a means to amplify program impact upon their return home. Examples of follow-on activities may include alumni conducting presentations/workshops that share their U.S. experiences and newly acquired knowledge and skills with others in their schools or communities, or engaging younger girls in interactive, technology-focused activities aimed at sparking their interest in the field.

The award recipient also will advise and assist the U.S. Embassies in implementing follow-on activities that foster continued engagement among all participants and offer additional

opportunities to reinforce the ideas, values, and skills imparted during the exchange.

U.S. Embassies will engage TechWomen alumnae in follow-on activities, to the greatest extent possible, to further support and encourage TechGirls alumnae, and develop lasting mentorships.

Evaluation: The Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) of 1993 requires that federal agencies measure the results of their programs in meeting performance goals. The proposal should demonstrate the applicant's plan to measure the short- and medium-term impact of the program. The follow-on activities will provide an opportunity to assess the impact of the exchanges on the participants, to determine how their attitudes have changed, and to evaluate the acquisition of knowledge and skills associated with program themes. The U.S. award recipient is required to collaborate with the participating U.S. Embassies in these efforts.

Alumni tracking is crucial for the evaluation of the program and for the implementation of follow-on programs. All alumni contact information gathered by the award recipients on behalf of this program must be made available to the Department of State.

Other Notes: The recipient organization is responsible for all components of the program outlined in this document. In addition, the Bureau requires recipient organizations to communicate with ECA and PAS on a regular basis about program activities, including participant orientations, publicity, international travel, exchange activities, and follow-on activities. The organization must also inform the ECA Program Officer of their progress at each stage of the project's implementation in a timely fashion, and will be required to obtain written approval of any significant program changes in advance of their implementation. All materials and correspondence related to the program will acknowledge this as a program of the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. The Bureau will retain copyright use of and can distribute materials related to this program as it sees fit.

PROPOSAL CONTENTS

Applicants should submit a complete and thorough proposal describing the program in a convincing and comprehensive manner. Since there is no opportunity for applicants to meet with reviewing officials, the proposal should respond to the criteria set forth in the solicitation and other guidelines as clearly as possible.

Proposals should address succinctly, but completely, the elements described below and must follow all format requirements.

NOTE: Proposals submitted through Grants.gov may only be submitted in the following formats:

- Microsoft Word
- Microsoft Excel
- Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF)
- ASCII Text
- Joint Photographic Experts Group (JPEG images)

Proposals should include the following items under the section headings in the GrantSolutions:

Application Checklist

Online Forms

SF-424, “Application for Federal Assistance”

SF-424A, Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs

SF-424B, “Assurances - Nonconstruction Programs”

Include other attachments, if applicable, such as indirect agreements, form 990, SF-LLL, etc.

Executive Summary

In one double-spaced page, provide the following information about the project:

- 1) Name of organization/participating institutions
- 2) Beginning and ending dates of the program
- 3) Proposed theme
- 4) Nature of activity
- 5) Scope and Goals
- 6) Funding level requested from the Bureau, total program cost, total cost-sharing from applicant and other sources

Narrative

Within 20 double-spaced pages, provide a detailed description of the project addressing the areas listed below. In the narrative, applicants should not only describe major program activities but also explain and justify their programmatic choices.

- 1) **Vision:** Describe the project objectives and the desired outcomes, i.e., the knowledge, skills, and/or attitudinal changes that the participants will acquire.
- 2) **Participating Organizations:** Identify critical partner organizations for the program, their roles, and the applicant’s reasons for including them. Applicants must also describe their working relationship with the partner organization(s) and detail the division of program responsibilities between the award recipient and the partner organization(s).
- 3) **Program Activities:** Describe the components of the exchange and how they related to project themes, including program planning, orientations, the technology camp, educational and cultural activities, meetings, site visits, community service, the visit to Washington, D.C. at the conclusion of the exchange, and the closing workshop. A detailed outline of the three- to four-week exchange must be included as an appendix. Also, describe support for follow-on activities.
- 4) **Travel, Housing, and Other Logistics:** Detail how the applicant will domestic travel; homestays (be specific about the screening process); dormitory, hotel, and/or other housing; ground transportation; stipend disbursement; and relevant administrative matters.

- 5) Monitoring: Detail how the applicant will assure the well-being, safety, and security of program participants during all stages of the program. A monitoring plan should include the following:
 - a) The information provided in pre-departure orientation materials on safety and the avenues for youth to communicate concerns to staff;
 - b) The staff supervision provided when the participants are in hotels, dormitories, or camps;
 - c) Screening of host families, including criminal background checks for all household members over the age of 18;
 - d) The monitoring of participants while they are in homestays;
 - e) An emergency action plan.
- 6) Program Evaluation: In the submitted proposal, applicants should include a plan describing how success in meeting the stated goals of the program will be measured and reported. ECA recommends that the proposal include a draft survey questionnaire or other evaluation tool.
- 7) Diversity: Explain how the program managers will pro-actively support diversity in the selection of American participants for the technology camp (if applicable) and in program design and content, demonstrating how diversity can contribute to a vibrant civil society. Diversity should be defined broadly to include geographic, urban/rural, ethnic, racial, socio-economic, sexual orientation, and religious diversity.
- 8) Institutional Capacity and Project Management: Outline the applicant organization's capacity to conduct projects of this nature, focusing on three areas of competency: provision of educational and thematic programs, age-appropriate programming for youth, and any previous work in the region. Describe the program staffing (individuals by name and responsibilities), qualifications, structure, and resources. If applicable, include this information for primary partner organizations as well.
- 9) Follow-on Activities: Describe a plan to assist the U.S. Embassies in providing follow-on activities for TechGirls alumni.
- 10) Work Plan/Schedule: Outline the phases of the project planning and implementation for the entire award period. Provide a draft schedule of daily activities of the exchanges in an appendix.
- 11) Option Year: Applicants should provide a brief commitment to implement the program for the base year, plus two additional option years, pending successful program performance and the availability of funds.

Additional Information to be Submitted:

Budget Information

The level of funding available for the base year of the program is approximately \$190,000 for

one U.S.-based exchange for approximately 27 participants. The Bureau reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds.

The available funding may be used to support the program and administrative costs necessary to implement the program as described in this solicitation. Please submit a comprehensive line item budget, as stated in the Proposal Submission Instructions. An explanatory budget narrative must also be included.

Suggested program costs include, but are not limited to, the following:

- 1) Staff travel
- 2) Participant travel (domestic travel and ground transportation within the United States, including during the Washington, D.C. component.) This may also include expenses for American participants, if applicable
- 3) Orientations
- 4) Technology camp
- 5) Cultural and social activities
- 6) Meeting costs
- 7) Lodging, when not in homestay
- 8) Food (primarily group meals)
- 9) Follow-on activities
- 10) Evaluation
- 11) Pocket money for participants' incidental expenses
- 12) Other justifiable expenses directly related to supporting program activities

Significant cost sharing is expected and will enhance the proposal. Stipends for host families are not allowed as a grant-funded or cost-share item. While there is no rigid ratio of administrative to program costs, the Bureau urges applicants to keep administrative costs as low and reasonable as possible. Proposals should show strong administrative cost-sharing contributions from the applicant, the in-country partner, and other sources.

Maximum limits on funding are as follows: Books and educational materials allowance-\$100 per participant; Conference room rental costs-\$250 per day per room; Consultant fees and honoraria-\$250/day; Cultural allowance-\$150 per participant; Per diem-standard government rates; Evaluation costs- 3% of the cooperative agreement. Organizations are encouraged to cost-share any rates that exceed these amounts.

Exchange participants will be enrolled in the Bureau's Accident and Sickness Program for Exchanges (ASPE) to provide them with health benefits during the exchange. This cost does not need to be included in the budget. More information on ASPE is available at:
<http://www.usdos.sevencorners.com>.

Please refer to the PSI for allowable costs and complete budget guidelines and formatting instructions.

Letters of commitment

Include pledges to participate in the program's implementation from significant partner organizations and any receiving a sub-award. Letters from elected officials are generally not advised.

Resumes

Resumes of all program staff should be included in the submission. No one resume should exceed two pages.

Attachments/appendices

Please limit to those materials essential for understanding the proposed program, such as a draft schedule or evaluation questionnaires, to no more than 20 pages. Extensive attachments will detract from your proposal.

First Time Applicant Attachments, if applicable

First time applicant organizations and organizations which have not received an assistance award (grant or cooperative agreement) from the Bureau during the past three (3) years, must submit as an attachment to this form the following: (a) one copy of their Charter OR Articles of Incorporation; (b) a list of the current Board of Directors; and (c) current financial statements. Note: The Bureau retains the right to ask for additional documentation of those items included on this form.

Please note: Effective January 7, 2009, all applicants for ECA federal assistance awards must include in their application the names of directors and/or senior executives (current officers, trustees, and key employees, regardless of amount of compensation). In fulfilling this requirement, applicants must submit information in one of the following ways:

- Those who file Internal Revenue Service Form 990, "Return of Organization Exempt From Income Tax," must include a copy of relevant portions of this form.
- Those who do not file IRS Form 990 must submit information above in the format of their choice.

As part of final program reporting requirements, award recipients will also be required to submit a one-page document, derived from their program reports, listing and describing their grant activities. For award recipients, the names of directors and/or senior executives (current officers, trustees, and key employees), as well as the one- page description of grant activities, will be transmitted by the State Department to OMB, along with other information required by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA), and will be made available to the public by the Office of Management and Budget on its USASpending.gov website as part of ECA's FFATA reporting requirements.

APPLICATION SUBMISSION

The RFGP indicates the date the complete proposal is due and the manner in which proposals must be submitted. There are **NO EXCEPTIONS** to this deadline. For further information regarding this program or the proposal submission, please contact the Youth Programs Division program officer Sarah Shields, telephone: (202) 632-9261; e-mail address: ShieldsSD@state.gov.